



July 23, 2007

Dear Little Siss property owners;

As you know, we have been dealing with the ongoing saga of paying the Stout Island taxes for the past few years. Simply put, the interest from the fund that we set up several years ago to pay the taxes has been running short due to higher than anticipated tax increases.

After much discussion and study, I think we have come up with a viable solution that keeps the association in control of the island and will hopefully lower the taxes. That solution is a partnership with the West Wisconsin Land Trust (WWLT) whereas they will manage the island for us and pay the taxes while we retain ownership. While this management comes at a high financial cost to us, there is a way around it that would require all of us to become members in the WWLT.

How it works: WWLT would get a conservation easement (CE) from the state (something the association is unable to do for various reasons previously outlined in other documents) and a possible designation of the island by the state as a State Natural Area (SNA). We and the WWLT anticipate that this will afford the town assessor the opportunity to grant us some tax abatement.

In addition, one way we can avoid handing over a rather large check (which would be most of our available cash from the Stout Island Fund) is to have all property owners become members of the WWLT for about \$40 per year. WWLT has several member levels available up to \$1,000 per year, but all they are asking is that we become members to help offset most if not all of their usual fee for property management. The Stout Island Fund has been enormously helpful and I thank all who have donated to it and contributed much time to its creation and management. This fund has allowed all of the lake owners to enjoy Stout Island for the past several years. Now, this partnership with WWLT is a new avenue that allows all to contribute in a low-cost, fair and more equitable manner.

I have to say, membership is a small cost to pay to keep Stout Island as a central feature of our beautiful lake. We may not be able to control the influx of northern pike, the levels of the water or the eagerness of our local beaver population, but we can control what we choose to do with Stout Island.

Attached you will find a pledge form that I ask you to fill out letting me know your position on membership in the WWLT. The more property owners we have on board and committed to this cause, the better chance we have of being able to keep Stout Island in its current state, eliminate a large management fee and get our taxes lowered. I am not asking for your membership yet, just the likelihood of your participation for planning purposes.

For association members in good standing (paid up dues), I am asking for your vote on whether or not we move forward on this relationship with the WWLT.

The association by-laws do allow for proxy vote by mail or email and that is what I am proposing here. I would like to have this vote before the next association meeting on Sept. 1st so I can announce the results then. If we have a "yes" vote, we will draft formal papers and inform everyone at that time via the association website (www.littlesissabagama.org). Then we will vote on acceptance of the final draft and move forward to attempt to get the CE and tax abatement.

Lastly, I would like to thank those property owners who have worked so hard to get the process to where we are today: Jim & Alice Kissinger (Alice does all the email typing), Peter Lytle, Mark Johnson and Rick Gauger of the WWLT.

Detach and return via mail to me (my contact info is listed below) or email me your decisions. Please feel free to call me with any questions at home or at the lake or email me.



Sincerely,

Chuck Abrams
President
Little Sissabagama Shoreowners Association
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For more information on the West Wisconsin Land Trust and its available membership levels, please visit www.wwlt.org

----- *please detach and mail to Chuck Abrams* -----

(For **all property owners** and their families)

- Yes, we will participate in the Stout Island association with West Wisconsin Land Trust and become members.
Possible number of memberships I/we would be interested in (please circle) 1 2 3 Other _____
Possible Membership level \$40 (annually) Other _____

- No, we are not interested in becoming WWLT members.

Name: _____

(Send NO money to WWLT at this time unless you are planning on joining WWLT no matter what)

----- *please detach and mail to Chuck Abrams* -----

(For **association members** only. One vote per property owner household allowed.)

- I accept the proposal to move forward with the West Wisconsin Land Trust in establishing a Conservation Easement on Stout Island, retaining association ownership on Stout Island while establishing WWLT management of the Island and working towards county tax abatement.
- No, I do not support the proposal to move forward with the West Wisconsin Land Trust.

Name: _____